

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

appeared to represent the Commune and the citizens implicated, who (they said) could not appear in person, as they were all in prison at Florence.

They protested the innocence of the Republic, painted a lurid picture of the evil deeds of the papal legates, and implored an extension of the time that they might fully answer all accusations. In reply, Gregory solemnly put Florence under the interdict, revoked all privileges granted by his predecessors, declared the goods of each Florentine confiscated, their possessions and persons to be the free prey of any who could make themselves masters of them ; he forbade, under the same penalties, any private person, community or prince to have any dealings with them or favour them in any way, all previous obligations being cancelled, and threatened to invoke the arms of all the powers of Christendom upon the entire nation. The Eight, together with fifty-one other citizens named (among whom was Niccolo Soderini), were excommunicated, and, together with their sons and grandsons, formally deprived of all civic rights and legal protection, unless they appeared at Avignon by May 30. Against this sentence, Donato Barbadori uttered an impassioned and solemn protest, in the name of the Republic; turning to the great Crucifix that hung opposite the papal throne, he appealed from the Sovereign Pontiff to Christ Himself: "Look upon me, O God of my salvation, and be Thou my helper ; do not Thou forsake me, for my father and my mother have forsaken me."¹

But, while these things were being done at Avignon, Catherine at Siena had a vision, in which it seemed to her that the Divine Bridegroom bade her, with the Cross on her shoulders and the olive-branch in her hand, intervene between the Church and her opponents :—

" On the night of the first of April," she writes to Raimondo and his companions, " God more specially revealed His secrets,

¹ Cf. Gherardi, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46, documents 198, 199; St. Antoninus, *ARotterdam*, III. pp. 379-382. On April 5, Charles IV put Florence under the ban of the Empire ; but his previous exploits at Siena had taught the Florentines what his imperial threats were worth.